



Lawyers Alliance
for New York

Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities



November 12, 2012

Michael J. Twersky of DLA Piper LLP
Quality Lawyering Supports Facilities that Serve Individuals and Families

Accomplishment: Recipient of Lawyers Alliance for New York's **2012 Cornerstone Award** honoring outstanding pro bono legal services to nonprofits, to be presented on November 13.

Highlights: Michael J. Twersky is an associate at DLA Piper LLP whose practice is focused on real estate and real estate finance. He received a B.S. from Ithaca College in 1990 and a J.D. from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in 1998.

Mr. Twersky assisted the **YWCA of Brooklyn** (the "YWCA") in the preparation of a construction contract for significant upgrades to its residence, which houses over 200 low-income and formerly homeless women. The YWCA's 180,000 square foot building in downtown Brooklyn offers 300 units of affordable, safe housing and a community center dedicated to social justice initiatives. The Housing Program serves women fleeing domestic abuse, the homeless, the working poor, and those in need of a safe, affordable place to stay. The YWCA's Executive Director, Martha Kamber, says, "Michael was lovely to work with, smart, and very well prepared. He demonstrated excellent follow through, and worked well with all parties involved. He also adjusted to changes in the contract with ease and good humor. We could not have closed this contract without his steadfast assistance."

Mr. Twersky assisted the **Committee for Early Childhood Development** ("CECD") whose Head Start programs in Queens support the development of preschool children from low-income families. He helped the nonprofit assess its board governance and bylaws procedures and clarify its real estate tax obligations, including obtaining a retroactive tax exemption that saved the program more than \$200,000. CECD's Executive Director, Mojisola Bafunso, says, "Mr. Twersky has generously devoted his time, expertise, and energy. We thank him for working so diligently with our fiscal staff to achieve the tax exempt status."

He also receives high praise from **Sinergia**, which provides case management, service coordination, and other services, including transitional housing and community residences, to individuals with developmental disabilities and families of individuals with disabilities. Mr. Twersky volunteered to help Sinergia with the legal aspects of the purchase and financing of a condominium unit in Harlem to be used for its respite program, which allows families of those with developmental disabilities to have a much-deserved day, overnight, or weekend rest. Myrta Cuadra-Lash, Sinergia's Executive Director, says, "Michael's advice was crucial in our decision-making process; he was very knowledgeable, patient, and helpful."

Mr. Twersky says, "I am fortunate to work at a law firm which encourages pro bono involvement and to have an opportunity, through Lawyers Alliance, to find personally and professionally rewarding opportunities to use my skills to give back to the community. Seeing the effect of our work for clients in such vital need of such services and who are truly appreciative of the efforts has been a rewarding and deeply satisfying experience."

About Lawyers Alliance for New York: Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys collaborate to deliver expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, intellectual property, and other legal services to community organizations. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers. During the past year, 12 staff attorneys and 1,428 volunteer attorneys represented 628 clients on 1,026 matters and assisted hundreds of additional groups through its educational programs.

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